

Thank you for the chance to contribute to this hearing.

My name is Jason Oliver Chang. I'm the son of Chinese and Irish immigrants that arrived in the country more than a century ago. With a PhD from University of California Berkeley I'm Assistant Professor at UConn jointly appointed between the History department and Asian American Studies, i'm affiliated faculty with the Latino, Caribbean, and Latin American Studies Institute and Associate Director of the Asian and Asian American Studies Institute. I'm here today because I believe proposed cuts to UConn's funding is a counter-productive measure of addressing the state's budget issues. As a faculty member I see on a daily basis how budget cuts negatively impact the quantity and quality of research and education at UConn. From reductions in research funding to cutbacks in library services and materials the gaps created by these cuts may patch temporary budgetary shortfalls but they result in a weaker research agenda, less competitive academic employment and reduced educational resources. The effect of the proposed budget cuts will ripple out beyond the immediate fiscal year. When our libraries end subscriptions to academic journals and cut the new book acquisitions program students lose sight of cutting edge research. Without a competitive faculty research funding profile, hiring and retention of top tier faculty weakens our national standing.

When I started at UConn in 2011 I was fortunate to have won several competitive internal research grants that funded the research and completion of my first book, entitled *Chino: Anti-Chinese Racism in Mexico, 1880-1940*. The book reveals the hidden history of how anti-Chinese racial hatred and violence shaped national identity and government authority in post-revolutionary Mexico. While also winning external research fellowships and grant money, my book and career at UConn has been underwritten by the legislature's support. The job of faculty at a state research university, like UConn, is to produce new knowledge to benefit society and train the next generation of thinkers and doers.

When my research flourishes, my students flourish. I pass innovation on to the students in my classes and in the intellectual life of the Asian and Asian American Studies Institute. I have added to new efforts at the university to reduce costs to students with the development of textbook-free classes. In order to do this for my students I need to conduct research and develop new resources building access to education is a central obligation of public institutions. When I teach the history of U.S. immigration or Asian American history, my students engage in research driven learning asking new questions of historical debates and finding new relevance from historical insights. For instance, In my classes students engage the history of race-based immigration controls on Chinese immigrants and Jewish refugees for example, and consider the historical effects of these exclusionary measures. These questions are paramount for our contemporary condition. As another example, when students in my class learn about Executive Order 9066 that interned 120,000 Japanese Americans in 1942 they come to terms with the weight of war time racism mixed with imperatives of national security. In these lessons students understand how education is vital to democracy. These times call for more education funding, not less. In the History Department we teach students to examine primary historical material from competing sources and evaluate their significance. In a climate of alternative facts and fake news, critical thinking skills and research driven knowledge are vital to improving the practice of democratic citizenship.

When the state financially supports public research universities it helps to ensure that we keep asking better questions for the public good. Fulfilling the state's obligation to public universities leads to more ambitious research, stronger faculty recruitment, robust educational resources, and we can satisfy our students' curiosity with new research and push them out to new heights. Funding our state's public universities is not just a good investment in our youth, it's also a recognition that citizens learn to question the world around

them and collectively answer.

In response to a question from the Appropriations Committee regarding the courses I teach:

A normal teaching load for tenure track faculty in a top tier research university is two courses in each of the fall and spring semesters (referred to as a 2/2 teaching load). With added administrative duties from the Associate Director appointment, I teach a 2/1. Beyond my contractual teaching duties I also instruct online courses during the winter intersession and summer break. Each semester I adjust my courses to respond to student feedback and incorporate new research from the larger scholarly field. I am currently working with Charter Oak International Academy school in West Hartford to bring research driven education models on immigration topics to the k-5 curriculum and after school programs.